



## Additional Reading

A line-by-line comparison of Bennett's original poem (in bold text) to a literal Standard English translation (in italicized text).

### Bans a Killin

by Louise Bennett

(translation into literal Standard English by Laura Moss, with assistance from Susan Gingell)

**So yuh a de man, me hear bout!**

*So you are the man I've heard about!*

**Ah yuh dem sey dah-teck**

*you are the one they say has taken*

**Whole heap o' English oat sey dat**

*a whole heap of English oaths to say that*

**Yuh gwine kill dialect!**

*you are going to kill dialect!*

**Meck me get it straight Mass Charlie**

*Let me get this straight Master Charlie*

**For me noh quite undastan,**

*for I don't quite understand*

**Yuh gwine kill all English dialect**

*Are you going to kill all English dialects*

**Or jus Jamaica one?**

*or just the Jamaican one?*

**Ef yuh dah-equal up wid English**

*If you are equaling up with the English*

**Language, den wha meck**

*language, then what makes*

**Yuh gwine go feel inferior, wen**

*you go and feel inferior when*

**It come to dialect?**

*it comes to dialect?*

**Ef yuh kean sing 'Linstead Market'**

*If you can't sing 'Linstead Market'*

**An 'Wata come a me y'eye',**

*and 'Wata come a me y'eye'*

**Yuh wi haffi tap sing 'Auld lang syne'**

*You will have to stop singing 'Auld lang syne'*

**An 'Comin thru de rye'.**

*and 'Coming through the rye'.*

**Dah language weh yuh proad o',**

*The language that you are proud of*

**Weh yuh honour and respeck,**

*that you honor and respect*

**Po' Mass Charlie! Yuh noh know sey**

*poor Master Charlie? You don't know [enough] to say*

**Dat it spring from dialect!**

*that it springs from dialect!*

**Dat dem start fe try tun language,**

*That they start to try to turn [English into a] language*

**From de fourteen century,**

*from the fourteenth century*

**Five hundred years gawn an dem got**

*five hundred years have passed and they have*

**More dialect dan we!**

*more dialect than we do!*

**Yuh wi haffe kill de Lancashire**

*You would have to kill the Lancashire [dialect]*

**De Yorkshire, de Cockney**

*the Yorkshire, the Cockney,*

**De broad Scotch an de Irish brogue,**

*the broad Scottish and the Irish brogue*

**Before yuh start to kill me!**

*before you start [to think of] killing me!*

**Yuh wi haffe get de Oxford book**

*You would have to get the Oxford book*

**O' English verse, an tear**

*of English verse, and tear*

**Out Chaucer, Burns, Lady Grizelle**

*out Chaucer, Burns, Lady Grizelle*

**An plenty o' Shakespeare!**

*and plenty of Shakespeare*

**Wen yuh done kill 'wit' an 'humour'**

*When you are done killing 'wit' and 'humour'*

**Wen yuh kill 'Variety'**

*when you've killed 'variety'*

**Yuh wi haffe fine a way fe kill**

*you will have to find a way to kill*

**Originality!**

*Originality!*

**An mine how yuh dah-read dem English**

*And mind how you read the English*

**Book deh pon yuh shelf**

*books upon your shelf*

**For ef yuh drop a 'h' yuh mighta**

*for if you drop an 'h' you might*

**Haffe kill yuhself.**

*have to kill yourself.*

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